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ABSTRACT

In 1986, following the mandate of the North Dakota Legislature, the Teachers' Professional Practices Commission recommended to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction a statewide model for professional development of educators. The model was developed in cooperation with educators, professional associations, state agencies, two state universities, and the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory. The model is holistic because it takes into account the entire spectrum of needs of the educator including professional growth, personal growth through professional associations, opportunities for education through internships and on-the-job training, opportunities for guided practice and peer assessment, creation of classroom and school climates conducive to learning, educator empowerment by the district, and opportunities to participate in activities fostering physical and mental health. Two appendices are included, one listing research findings on conditions that lessen the impact of professional growth activities, and one enumerating some common limitations to staff development and professional growth. (MT)

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Department of Public Instruction

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Professional Development Model



A "Wholistic" Approach

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FOREWORD

In 1985, the North Dakota Legislature amended the duties of the Teachers' Professional Practices Commission to include providing recommendations for inservice education for professional educators. The Teachers' Professional Practices Commission responded to this charge by seeking input from interested educators, professional associations, and agencies to assist in the development of a statewide model for professional development of educators.

The model presented here is an integration of the excellent work done for the Commission by Dr. Robert Boyd, Dean, Division of Continuing Education, University of North Dakota; Dr. Richard Chenoweth, Director, Continuing Studies, North Dakota State University; and Dr. Robert Ewy, Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), Denver, Colorado. Special appreciation is given to these dedicated educators for insightful work in developing this statewide model.

On August 4, 1986, the Teachers' Professional Practices Commission recommended the adoption of the model to the State Superintendent. The State Superintendent's Hearing on the model was held on October 23, 1986.

The development and adoption of this model for the professional development of educators provides excellent opportunities for collaborative arrangements among the Department of Public Instruction, professional associations, colleges and universities, and local school districts to enhance the professional development of educators in North Dakota.

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
State Superintendent

THE NORTH DAKOTA MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This is an uniquely opportune period in time to focus on the professional growth of persons within education. Teacher educators, practitioners, policymakers and researchers are all recognizing that to create excellence in schools, you must first create excellence in people. There is an emerging consensus that the best solutions to pressing problems is to be found in better utilization of the human resources that presently exist in schools and the better preparation of potential candidates for the profession of teaching. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the challenges of helping professionals grow in this era of criticism, conflicting expectations, and greater and greater demands for accountability and productivity will call for masterful management of all phases of professional growth.

No one would deny the historical importance of professional growth experiences and inservice education. See Appendix A Research Findings and Appendix B Limitations. Many factors have recently converged to underscore its contemporary importance. These factors include not only the demographics of the teacher population but also public perceptions of the competency of both students and teachers, recognition of the shortcomings of preservice and inservice teacher education, the complicated nature of professional growth, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the interest that teachers themselves have demonstrated in improving their professional skills.

PURPOSE OF THE MODEL

The expressed purpose of this statewide model is to manage professional growth and development as if it were important, that is, to devote the time and attention needed to coordinate needs and services among the major participants so that professional growth activities are both effective and efficient. This devotion is what is needed to tie together state and local needs, to coordinate services, to evaluate the quality of services and most importantly, to move away from piecemeal practices that have decidedly limited impact on the growth of educational professionals.

There has been much talk and very little action across the nation about the shared responsibilities which institutions with like missions should demonstrate. In the matter of a teacher's growth in his or her career, it appears reasonable to assume that teacher education institutions, school systems, professional organizations and the North Dakota State Department of Public Instruction would have a considerable vested interest in making that experience as positive as possible. What is being proposed then is a model for guiding the professional growth of educators which illustrates this like-mindedness of purpose. That is, the teacher education officials, the school system staff, the professional associations and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction would join together

to provide guidance and statewide management to the professional growth of educators. It is believed that all parties with interest in professional growth and school improvement should be given some control and influence upon both the quantity and quality of these activities to more effectively and efficiently manage the development of North Dakota's most precious educational resource, its teachers and administrators. They and they alone are the ones who actually create excellence within the schools of North Dakota.

How the Model Works

This professional development model intentionally carries a broader perspective than "inservice education" with its traditional emphasis on training to remedy deficiencies. Professional development is defined as a process or plan of professional growth which intentionally helps the educator be more effective. The entire spectrum of needs of the educator must be taken into account. "Professional educator" is defined to include all professional educators in the schools including teachers, administrators, counselors, and professional educators in other roles.

The model is a "wholistic" approach to professional development, one which suggests that there are identifiable parts to the whole of professional development and that each must be addressed if the educator is going to be effective. Because of its complexity the model requires a greater commitment but promises more in return.

School districts are encouraged to develop a local model patterned after this statewide model.

Developing the Recommendations

The Teacher Professional Practices Commission (TPPC) is responsible for the formulation of recommendations pertaining to professional development. The recommendations along with supporting documentation and plans and specifications shall be submitted to the State Superintendent by April 1 of each even-numbered year. The State Superintendent will adopt for each biennium a statewide professional development plan inclusive of activities, responsibilities, and funding.

In the formulation of the recommendations, the TPPC shall coordinate its data gathering, analysis, interpretation, and the development of the recommended plans and specifications through the Network for Excellence in Teaching (NET).¹ NET will provide a coherent and comprehensive filter through which all statewide professional growth needs and services can pass. This does not mean that the TPPC or the NET have a veto function. Rather, this filtering process permits a comprehensive assessment and the development of a coordinated approach.

¹To secure the best possible data, the NET has been chosen because of its comprehensive and flexible membership. For example, the NET has representation from state agencies, professional associations, various groups representative of higher education, and institutionalized inservice delivery systems. The NET will be able to add, when needed on an ad hoc basis, other representatives to secure specific and direct input.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL

Personal Professionalism

DEFINITION

Personal Professionalism involves those experiences which assist the individual to grow professionally but are generally individually initiated, funded and implemented.

Purpose I:

To encourage the educator to prepare a written multi-year plan for professional growth.

Responsibility:

Educator
District Administration

Process:

The actual written plan should be finalized by the educator but its development is done in consultation with immediate supervisors and district administrators.

There are many styles for written plans of growth from the formal contract with the administration to the personal, private diary. The plan, nevertheless, should include consideration of recertification requirements, the individual's professional strengths and weaknesses, growth opportunities through professional associations, personal travel and private reading.

Purpose II:

To encourage personal professional growth through membership in professional associations.

Responsibility:

Educator
Professional Associations
District Board
District Administration

Process:

The educator must seek out and join those professional associations which can assist in professional growth.

These should encourage, instill enthusiasm and pride, and cause the educators to want and demand more of themselves as professionals. In addition, school boards should encourage, provide time, and provide resources so that educators may participate.

Academic Training

DEFINITION

Training involves those continued formal and structured educational experiences which enable the educator to be more effective.

Purpose I:

To provide educators with opportunities for training/education.

Responsibility:

Institutions of Higher Education
District Administration
Professional Associations
Department of Public Instruction

Process:

The methods and styles of providing formal credit and noncredit training/education will vary from the formal quarter/semester-long credit course to the brief after-school presentations. It is important that the method be appropriate to the content.

Institutions of higher education will provide credit-bearing education. They, as providers, should survey their clients to ascertain needs and, where possible, provide access to programs which will permit teachers to work towards advanced degrees.

The administrations of school districts, professional organizations and the Department of Public Instruction have the responsibility of cooperating with institutions of higher education in providing and encouraging opportunities for teachers to enroll in credit courses and degree programs, and providing formal noncredit programs, when appropriate.

Districts through adequate monetary rewards, must encourage individuals who are working toward advanced degrees. Additionally, direct subsidies for such coursework should be considered.

The Department of Public Instruction should monitor the formal training and advise school districts and institutions of higher education of training possibilities. In addition, it should

also monitor the national scene to keep all parties abreast of the latest trends and seek funding to supplement state and local training funds. The Department, however, should not be expected to become directly involved in training programs.

Purpose II:

To provide additional opportunities for training/education including internships and on-the-job training which may occur either in formal institutional settings or any place appropriate for the training.

Responsibility:

Institutions of Higher Education
District Administration
Department of Public Instruction

Process:

Internships of various kinds have proven to be valuable experiences for nearly every profession. Education is no exception. Institutions of higher education should be encouraged to develop processes for internship experiences. The Department of Public Instruction should assist in identifying cooperating school districts and the development of policies which allow such activities.

Educators in various disciplines should be encouraged to consider on-the-job training experiences outside of the school setting (e.g. biology teacher working in a game and fish unit; a history teacher working in a museum). These experiences are intended to provide examples of practical applications which can be used in the classroom.

The Department of Public Instruction should encourage school districts to provide such sabbatical time to educators.

Guided Practice

DEFINITION

Guided Practice involves those experiences which take advantage of professional coaching.

Purpose I:

To identify career professional educators and exemplary models and to provide opportunities for educators to observe and emulate through personal contact or audiovisual means.

Responsibility:

Educator
District Administration
Department of Public Instruction

Process:

School districts personnel state-wide should identify those exemplary programs and educators for use as models. The identification of the master educator and exemplary teaching and administrative methods will be the responsibility of teachers and administrators in the school district. Compilation, maintenance and distribution of a list of such should be the responsibility of the Department of Public Instruction. Educators and districts would choose the appropriate educator from the list and arrange with the host district for a visit and/or observation.

Master educators should be provided with the time to work with other educators who wish to observe them. This includes time to prepare model lessons and time to meet with the visiting professional after the observation.

Evaluation:

Formative evaluation should be reported by individual educators who participate in such programs and, where funded by the Department of Public Instruction, such evaluations should be conducted by the Department of Public Instruction.

Summative evaluation must be conducted by the educator's supervisors and those agencies funding the programs.

Purpose II:

To provide educators with assessments of their teaching or administration through a program of guided-peer assessments.

Responsibility:

Professional Organizations
Educator
District Administration
Department of Public Instruction

Process:

Educators who wish to have their teaching or administration assessed by peers for the purpose of improvement need a list of persons willing to serve as peer assessers. In larger districts this list may be generated internally but for the sake of smaller districts, the Department of Public Instruction would maintain a state-wide list.

The form of peer assessment could vary from contractual methods to the casual visit to the classroom or school by a colleague. The method, however, must be separate from formal summative evaluations done for purpose of tenure, promotions, merit pay and annual evaluations performed by supervisors.

Climate

DEFINITION

Climate pertains to the intellectual and physical environment which influences the effectiveness of the educational experiences.

Purpose I:

To create a learning/emotional climate within the classrooms conducive for desired learning.

Responsibility:

Educators
District Administration
Parents
Students

Process:

Because learning climate is primarily attitudinal, the main method for achieving the objective is by creating situations in which students and educators share the excitement of learning. The primary responsibility for making the classroom an exciting, equitable place of learning for the students rests with each educator. The method which will assure the best learning may vary with each professional, course area and/or group of students. It is most important, however, that the method be appropriate to the situation and that the desired learning takes place. It is also clear that the attitudes of both educators and students are affected by the larger community. Community members and their representatives on the school boards must exhibit the kind of attitude toward education which brings out the best in educators and students.

Purpose II:

To create an adequate physical climate (e.g., attractive and safe rooms, hallways, and grounds) which is conducive to learning.

Responsibility:

District Board
District Administration
Educators

Parents
Students
Professional Organizations
Institutions of Higher Education

Process:

Through proper maintenance, adherence to safety and legal requirements and periodic facility studies, the school board and school administration create and sustain attractive schools.

The Department of Public Instruction and institutions of higher learning can help by providing information on what constitutes a proper physical environment. Professional organizations can be called upon to provide information and guidance concerning acceptable working conditions.

It is important to note, however, that the emotional climate established will be an important factor in enhancing and preserving the facilities.

Empowerment

DEFINITION

Empowerment is the investiture, provided by the district to the professional educator, to make judgments, exercise prerogatives, engage in experimentation and make decisions within an appropriate sphere of control.

Purpose:

To provide the educator with the appropriate empowerment to function as a professional.

Responsibility:

District Administration
District Board

Process:

District boards should develop policies and procedures which enable the educator to be empowered in an environment of trust and support. District administrators should see that such policies are fairly administered and that appropriate rewards are granted.

Evaluation:

Periodic review of policies, procedures and practices related to this area should be held by a group representing all interested parties.

Personal Wellness

DEFINITION

Personal Wellness pertains to those factors related to the physical and mental health of professional educators.

Purpose:

To provide educators with encouragement and opportunities to participate in those activities which foster good physical and mental health.

Responsibility:

Educator
District Administration

Process:

Although often overlooked in education, the field of business long ago realized that the mental and physical health of an employee have an important influence on job performance. In light of the ever increasing demands on educators, districts would do well to learn from business. Part of the investment a district makes in the professional development of an educator should include attention to personal needs. Proper health care insurance, opportunities for mentoring, counseling and renewing experiences such as travel all serve as a security on the investment. Districts should develop policies and procedures which help identify personal needs of the educators and respond to them.

APPENDIX A

Research Findings

School and teachers today are asked to do it all. They are asked to give disenfranchised populations equal opportunity to achieve, to challenge the academically talented, to foster interracial acceptance, to instill democratic ideals, and to encourage individuality and high intellectual aspirations. Besides the problems presented by the changing context of education, several conditions continue to lessen the impact of professional growth activities for educators.

1. For most teachers, especially first-year teachers, learning occurs chiefly by experience alone in the classroom. It is often a matter of trial and error, unguided and not reflected upon. Lack of systematic staff development for teachers conveys the impression that teaching can be mastered independently in a short time by persons who have good sense and sufficient stamina. (Lanier and Little, 1985)
2. Compared with other professions, teachers enter into practice early and reach the level of professional acceptance of more experienced colleagues immediately. In the responsibilities assumed and rewards and opportunities available to them, novice and expert teachers are indistinguishable. Rewards for professional initiative and cumulative experience do not exist. (Sykes, 1983)
3. Beyond the lack of career ladders, staff development for teachers fails to take into account identified stages of human development. Inservice activities are the same for all regardless of age or experience. The first few years or induction stage of teacher development needs particular attention because of the large numbers of teachers who leave the profession early in their careers. This is a natural area for collaboration among universities, school systems, and state education agencies. (Hall, 1982)
4. When staff development programs for teachers do exist they operate in isolation from major district initiatives and without strong political support. Responsibility for staff development occurs low in the administrative structure of the school district, scattered among teachers and administrators with little coordination. The administration of staff development is isolated from curriculum development and instructional improvement priorities. (Lanier and Little, 1985) Compared to the corporate world, education makes minimal investment in training employees.

Hall, G. E. (1982). Induction: the missing link. Journal of Teacher Education, 33 (3), 53-55.

Lanier, J., and Little, J. (1985). Research and teacher education. In M. C. Wittrock (ed.) Handbook of research on teaching (pp. 527-569). New York: Macmillan.

Sykes, G. (1983). Public policy and the problem of teacher quality: The needs for screens and magnets. In L. Shulman and G. Sykes (eds.) Handbook of teaching and policy (pp. 97-125). New York: Longman.

APPENDIX B

Limitations

Just as there are issues of concern about managing professional growth which has historical problems, there are also some specific common limitations that are enumerated in studies and reviews of the literature of staff development and professional growth. Following is a listing of the more common limitations to staff development and professional growth.

1. The research base on staff development is weak in terms of describing what exists, let alone what is effective. Teachers have had a very small role in determining and evaluating effective professional growth activities. They must be able to more fully participate in all decisions about staff development and professional growth.
2. Staff development activities are infrequently related to measures of change in teacher behaviors or student learning outcomes.
3. Staff development in many situations remains largely an undifferentiated concept. The model form of inservice still appears to be either lecture-discussion or a workshop format. More research and development are needed relative to variations in clinical supervision, organizational development, cooperative problem solving, child study, and self-directed forms of staff development.
4. As critical as the need is for staff development projects to build on empirically supported teaching strategies and instructional materials, purposes other than pedagogical development need to be served. These include personal development, cognitive development, theoretical development, professional development, and career development. These purposes are not mutually exclusive but rather interrelated in powerful ways, and they need to be considered as more powerful and intensive staff development interventions are designed.
5. Classroom-relevant and empirically supported content and skills, such as teaching higher-order thinking, need to be better adapted to staff development formats.
6. There is a need for well-conceived follow-up activities to those inservice activities pursued outside the school or classroom context. These classroom activities can incorporate forms of peer instruction and even student involvement. They should also incorporate more demonstration, coaching, and opportunities for practice with feedback.

7. More conceptually coherent staff development programs are needed that attend both to the school as an organization and a social system and to the teacher as a person and a professional. Major context variables such as administrative support, general school norms or cultures, and teacher role relationships are too often not considered.
8. There is a need to address more fully the question of what will motivate teachers to participate in authentic ways in staff development activities. While monetary reimbursement and release time are obviously important factors, there are other major considerations. For example, these activities should be viewed as personally relevant and powerful enough to improve teacher competence and/or alter conditions in the school in significant ways.
9. Staff development is often presented and perceived as a way to correct a deficit rather than as a normal growth experience, a perception that further diminishes the image of teachers. This review emphasizes job-embedded forms of staff development.
10. There is a fundamental need to prepare staff development specialists who can work largely at individual school sites. (There is also an emerging database to guide the preparation of such individuals.)
11. Too often the staff development activity focuses solely on the teacher as the party responsible for improving instruction, without sufficient attention to other organizational, social, and political factors in the school and school community.